The State Chronicle

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SUNDAY, MARCH 30, 1890.

Equal and Exact Justice to all Men, of Whatever State or Persuasion, Religious or Political.--Thomas Jefferson.

RALEIGH'S BEST INSTITUTION.

We received late yesterday afternoon the reports of the Secretary and Superintendent of the Public Schools of Raleigh. They are very interesting and very valuable—far more so than the editorials we had prepared for to-day's CHRONICLE. We therefore publish them to the exclusion of our editorials.

A few days ago the CHRONICLE printed from the pen of PROF. GEO. T. WINSTON an article on "An Object Lesson in Education." He took the Goldsboro Graded Schools which were established by PROF. E. P. MOSES, now Superintendent of the Raleigh schools, as the ideal public school. He might with equal propriety except in the higher branches of instruction, have taken the Raleigh schools as the object lesson. Raleigh was the first city to establish graded schools in the State, and it opened the Centennial Graded School in 1876. Our schools have all along until now been hampered in their usefulness by a lack of money. With the increase in school fund we may confidently look for continued advancement in the vaulue of the schools.

Raleigh's chiefest glory is its educational facilities—its public and private schools. Its public schools are an honor to it—far transcending any mere material progress. Prof. Moses, the Superintendent, is an earnest, enthusiastic, successful instructor. His heart is in the work of educating and helping the boys and girls in the city. No boy or girl is too poor or too ignorant for him to feel a deep interest in their advancement. He is willing to spend and be spent, if need be, in bettering the condition and making easier the paths of the youth of Raleigh. He is assisted by a corps of accomplished and earnest men and women who find their best remuneration in the intelligent progress made by the bright boys and girls in the city. Let us all give them our warmest support and most cordial co-operation in the important and difficult work they have in hand. Let all the people of Raleigh hold up the hands of the committee whose members have known no duty more incumbent upon them than working for the welfare of the children, and to the Superintendant and teachers who hold the destiny of the city in their hands. Let us withhold no support and no aid, and then let us require a continuance of effort and a constant improvement in instruction and enlargement in every good way that experience demonstrates will add to the efficiency of our schools.

The report speaks for itself, and is worthy of a careful perusal. It's suggestions are of such a nature as to be of interest not only to the people of Raleigh but to all the friends of public education in the State. The CHRONICLE agrees fully with the views expressed by MR. THOS. H. BRIGGS, Secretary, that the exclusion of Latin and the reduction of grades have worked against the Superintendent and teachers achieving the best results. These two mistakes, as we conceive them to be, have denied the advantages of the schools to not a few bright and intelligent children. But the school has done so much good and its future is so bright, that we need dwell only upon the bright side of the picture. The reports are as follows:

RALEIGH, N. C., March 3, 1890.

Hon. A. A. Thompson, Mayor and Chairman of the Raleigh Graded School Committee:

DEAR SIR:—It again becomes my duty to place before you the annual report of this Board.

At the last report there was a debt amounting to $4,433.94; during the year now closing, this amount has been reduced to $1,998.15.

The disbursements have been:

For fuel, incidentals and supplies,	$1,216 25
Salaries of Superintendent, Teachers and Janitors,	7,445 87
Rent of Murphey School 11 months,	825 00
Interest,	173 67
Commissions of Treasurer,	250 05
Cash in hands of Secretary from amount borrowed,	1 85
	$9,912 69
Receipts for tuition of Latin, etc., now in hands of the Secretary,	$35 50
For fuel from the Teachers conducting private schools after close of the term, March. 1890,	9 00
Total,	$44 50

By the charge of tuition for Latin, etc., many very bright, promising children have been deprived of this training in the schools, being unable to meet the small charge made for that course of study. From inquiry of the superintendents of other schools in this State, we find that it is taught free as a regular part of the course. The limit of seven grades has also been to the disadvantage of the public, as some of our brightest pupils have been cut off entirely from school privileges just at a time when they would be most benefited. It has been suggested and advised that the age at which pupils are received should be extended to seven years instead of six. This is a subject which demands careful consideration.

Mr. D. S. Waitt has been placed on the board to fill the unexpired term of Rev. F. L. Reid, who resigned on account of feeble health and pressure of private business. His counsels were most valuable and we lose them with regret.

The details of the working of the schools will be presented in the report of our efficient Superintendent.

Respectfully submitted,
THOS. H. BRIGGS,
Sec'y Raleigh Graded School Com.

Report of the Superintendent of the Raleigh Public Schools.

To the School Committee:

GENTLEMEN:—I herewith submit a report of your school for five months ending February 15th, 1890:

Enumeration from 6 to 21.	4548
Number of white pupils enrolled—boys, 462; girls, 581,	1043
Number of colored pupils enrolled—boys, 633; girls, 742,	1375
Total number enrolled,	2418
Average number daily—white, 867; colored, 962,	1829
Average daily attendance of white pupils,	727
Average daily attendance of colored pupils,	827
Average daily attendance,	1554
Per cent. of enrollment on enumeration,	53
Per cent. of attendance on enumeration,	34
Per cent. of attendance on enrollment—white 69; colored, 60,	64
Number of days taught,	91

Enrollment and Attendance.

The enrollment in the white schools for the term just ended is one thousand and forty-three, against an enrollment of eleven hundred and twenty-seven for the corresponding period last year—a decrease in the enrollment in the white schools of eighty-four. The average daily attendance in the white schools is seven hundred and twenty-seven against an attendance for corresponding period of last year of eight hundred and sixteen—a decrease in the average daily attendance of eighty-nine. There is a decrease in the enrollment in the colored schools of eighteen, but in the average daily attendance there is an increase of one hundred and nine over corresponding period of last year. To recapitulate, we find in all the schools a decrease in enrollment of one hundred and two and an increase in the average daily attendance of twenty. The average number belonging to the schools was eighteen hundred and twenty-nine against eighteen hundred and seven for last year—an increase of twenty-two. The falling off in the number in the white schools I attribute principally to two causes; the abolition of the eighth grade and the recommendation of the board of aldermen to secure legislation fixing the minimum school age at seven years. By reason of this action of the board the number of children in our first grade was smaller than in previous years, as the impression prevailed to a considerable extent that this recommendation had been enacted into a law

The School Age.

I cannot commend too highly the action of the Board of Aldermen in taking steps toward raising the age of admission. I respectfully call your attention again to the subject as one of the most important questions pertaining to the good of the schools. If we are to have but seven grades I am firmly of the opinion that these seven grades should be for children from eight or nine to fifteen or sixteen, rather than for children from six to thirteen. I believe that one thousand dollars spent for the education of children over twelve will do as much good as three thousand dollars spent for those under eight or nine. It may not be out of place to say that I have not yet taught my eldest child either to read or to write, although she is eight years old. As things now stand, many of the teachers have too many pupils, many children of fourteen, fifteen and sixteen who most need instruction are getting nothing, and much as the force of the school is expended upon very young children who ought not to be in school at all.

Trained Teachers.

Has not the time come, gentlemen, when you will determine to employ none but trained teachers? I believe that professional training is as necessary for a teacher as for a physician. I think that the efficiency of the work of each teacher in your schools is proportionate to the number of years spent by that teacher in the study of educational principles and in efforts to carry out those principles in the school room. Their faithfulness is worthy of all praise. Of many of them we are justly proud.

Principles and Methods.

There is still much misunderstanding in regard to our aim and methods. Superintendent McAlister, of Philadelphia, has recently declared that no one has ever better defined the teacher's office than Lord Bacon, who stated it to be the establishment of a just familiarity betwixt the mind and things. Your Superintendent has been endeavoring to carry this spirit into all the schools. By reason of imperfect training in this direction of himself and his teachers, the work has been far from what we would have it. To teach children how to spell words, the meanings of which are unknown; to teach figure processes in arithmetic, before teaching "the reason why" with things; to repeat rules in grammar, to recite history by heart, to read without expression, to accept on recitation words without thoughts—all these things we have attempted to cast out of your schools. Observation rather than hearsay testimony should be the basis of knowledge. This is the kind of "study" I have mapped out for my own children.

Drawing.

As a matter of intellectual training, I am quite sure that drawing from nature is far superior to writing for young children. Thus far we have made very little progress in our attempts to have the children taught drawing, but we have done something, and as time goes by, I trust that we shall be able to do better work in this department.

Reading.

I do not think that it is idle boasting to say that the reading as a general thing in such school rooms as are not crowded is now excellent. We had great difficulty in changing from the alphabetic to the word and phonic method, but we have won success.

Arithmetic.

The work in arithmetic is improving just as rapidly as teachers get their consent to teach objectively. Several books based upon this principle have very recently made their appearance. I am sure that these books will do much toward convincing the public and inexperienced teachers that the sort of work which we have been attempting to do for several years past, crude and imperfect through it still remains, is not only not unique and foolish, but that it is the plan carried on in many of the best schools of the world, and that it is based upon the soundest philosophical principles.

History.

In history as a rule we are doing fairly well—some teachers are succeeding admirably. However, we can never do the best work until we can get a good working library in each school.

Geography.

Our work in geography is not by any means what it should be. In this study more than any other now in our schools the memory is still too often burdened at the expense of the judgment and the imagination. Those teachers who have acquired skill in the use of the moulding board have added largely to their usefulness as teachers of geography.

Language Training.

Notwithstanding the immense importance of scientific training, it is absolutely valueless, nay impossible, without thorough training in the use of language. I would not be understood as undervaluing in the least the importance of thorough linguistic training. I believe it was Lord Brougham who said that no man could know one language until he knew two. If parents expect their children to become educated in the best sense of the term, they should see that at least one foreign language is carefully studied. Considerable improvement has been made in our composition work. While many of the papers submitted by the pupils are still wretchedly poor, greatly to the mortification of myself and the teachers, very many of them are a credit to the schools and the very strongest possible testimony to the earnest and patient labors of your faithful teachers who spend weary hours poring over them at night.

Form Study and Manual Training.

I am gratified at some excellent specimens of work in paper and pasteboard which I have seen done by members of the form class. This work has been done by boys of the seventh, sixth and fifth grades under the direction of Mr. Miller. The general plan pursued was that laid down in Spencer's Inventional Geometry. We have done some work in clay modeling and paper folding and cutting, but we have not given sufficient time to this very important line of work. The sewing of the girls in the first, second and third grades of the Murphey School, and the fourth grade at the Centennial School, is worthy of praise. Speaking in general terms, however, we have scarcely touched this great subject of industrial training. Experience in the best schools of the country has shown that such work not only does not interfere with the literary work done by the pupils, but makes that better. In my mind it is simply a question of time when all children in school will be given instruction in paper, pasteboard and clay and cloth or wood.

Vocal Music.

The recent introduction of vocal music, under the direction of a special teacher, will prove very popular, I think, with parents, teachers and pupils, and of great value to the schools.

Spelling.

From the fact that spelling is not taught in the same manner in which it was commonly taught years ago, an impression prevails to a greater or less extent that we do not teach spelling. This is a great mistake. I do not hesitate to say that I have given the matter a great deal of care and attention, and I believe that the same thing can be said of the teachers generally, and that the results obtained will compare very favorably with results obtained elsewhere. Bad spelling is undeniably a bad thing. There is as much sense in drawing a face with three eyes, placing one in the forehead, as in drawing the word *which* with six letters, placing a "t" near the middle. Surely everything that is worth doing at all is worth doing well. For my part I cannot understand how any teacher can ever tolerate such literal monstrosities as are too frequently met with. It is not a good plan to compel a child to commit to memory hundreds and thousands of words with the idea that if the child's life is spared and he does not forget them, a portion of these words may some day be used. The time for a child to learn to spell a word is the instant the child has occasion to write that word for the first time. If the child has not a clear concept of the word to be written, a dictionary should be consulted on the same principle that I would look at a horse if I desired to draw a horse. Children should be supplied with dictionaries very early and should use them constantly in reading and writing. As long as teachers permit the writing of incorrect forms, just so long will indolent pupils content themselves with guessing at the correct forms, rather than go to the trouble of looking for them. Oliver Wendell Holmes somewhere speaks of his open dictionary. The expression is a good one.

Course of Study.

The course of study in our American schools is not extensive enough. To feed intelligent children year after year almost exclusively upon the three R's is to give them little better treatment than the doses of treacle and sulphur administered every morning to Squeers' pupils at Dotheboys Hall. In a recent magazine article, Prof. Jos. Rodes Buchanan writes: "From my own observation I should say that boys of ten years rightly managed from the first should be already familiar with the outlines of botany, zoology, chemistry, natural philosophy, astronomy, mineralogy, mechanics and physiology as well as geography and history." The standard is a high one, but not much higher, I am inclined to think, than that now set up by the best teachers of Europe.

Much Remains to be Done.

It seems to me to be the part of wisdom to determine to study all systems of education and appropriate what is based upon sound educational principles. The sooner we do this the better it will be for our children and our country. People readily make use of improvements in medicine and surgery wherever they come from. I do not see why they should be more conservative about educational methods. President Adams, of Cornell, has declared that the public schools of America are far inferior to those of Germany. Dr. L. Seeley, after much experience in the schools of this country and of Germany, has recently written: "*The teachers of Germany are trained for their work before they can enter upon it* and are placed on trial in the school room until their proficiency is proven; after which they are established in their profession for life. German teachers just as much expect to remain teachers as lawyers expect to remain lawyers. How different is this from American practice where a large proportion of the teachers intend to remain in the work only until an offer of marriage, a business opening or something else turns up to make a way of escape." The italics are mine. As long ago as 1868, Mr. Matthew Arnold declared that Europe had nothing to learn from American schools. In the last report of the United States Commissioner of Education, I read an account of the public schools of the Republic of Switzerland, which I wish every man in Raleigh could read. It will appear, at first, to the reader, doubtless more like a beautiful vision of what ought to be than a sober, truthful account of what actually exists, and yet I have no doubt that every line is true. The reader will learn that the finest building in the Swiss town is the public school, that a spirit of kindliness between teachers and children pervades the schools, that all teachers are governed in their work of teaching Swiss children by the principles of pedagogy, that corporal punishment is unknown, that the interest of the people in the success of the public school is universal, and that they tell the stranger with pride that no illiterates can be found among them. The picture of the advantages now enjoyed by the children of that rugged land is a pleasing one to look upon. Shall we not hope that it is an earnest of what in God's own good time will come to us? Amid all our difficulties we can find much to cheer us in these noble words of Robert E. Lee: "The march of Providence is so slow and our desires so impatient, the work of progress is so immense and our means of aiding it so feeble, the life of humanity so long and that of the individual so brief, that we often see only the ebb of the advancing wave, and are thus discouraged. It is history that teaches us to hope."

Respectfully submitted,
EDWARD P. MOSES,
Superintendent.